

WASHINGTON, DC— Representative Peter DeFazio (D-OR) today introduced the War Powers Amendments of 2011, legislation which will protect and defend constitutionally-supported war powers granted to Congress. For over 150 years, Congress, the courts, and presidents have followed the intent of our founders. But, when President Truman took the U.S. to war in Korea there began a steady erosion of congressional war powers, which can be witnessed most recently in President Obama's use of U.S. military forces in Libya.

The Supreme Court ruled that Members of Congress do not have the standing to enforce the War Powers Act. This would be rectified by DeFazio's legislation. In addition, DeFazio's bill clarifies the collective judgment that both the Congress and the President to apply to the use of U.S. military actions, ensuring that unilateral military operations face Congressional scrutiny.

"The Founding Fathers were very clear when they crafted the Constitution," DeFazio said. "The solemn war-making powers were granted to the Legislative Branch, not the Executive. The President's recent decision to engage U.S. military forces and equipment in the Libyan conflict is the most recent example in a long-standing Executive Branch tradition of ignoring this constitutionally-affirmed power. This bill will re-establish Congress as a co-equal branch of the federal government and it will defend the Constitution as the Founders intended."

DeFazio has long sought to strengthen the 1973 War Powers Resolution by requiring the President to seek advanced congressional approval before U.S. Armed Forces are introduced in conflict, except in the case of an immediate threat to the territory and possessions of the United States, its troops, or its citizens overseas.

One of the first bills DeFazio introduced as a member of Congress in 1987, was a resolution declaring that the requirement of the War Powers Resolution applied to President Reagan's use of U.S. Naval forces to escort reflagged Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf. DeFazio and then Rep. Mike Lowry subsequently organized a lawsuit against President Reagan that included more than 100 members of Congress as plaintiffs. It was the largest lawsuit ever brought by members of Congress against a sitting President. In 1999, he introduced legislation to strengthen the War Powers Act.

DeFazio has been a long-time critic of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. He strongly opposed the launch of the Iraq war and vehemently opposed all efforts to escalate the Afghanistan war. He

has consistently supported efforts to draw down U.S. forces in Afghanistan, recently voting for Rep. Kucinich's plan for a withdrawal of U.S. troops.

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